

DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

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RICHARD L. STALDER, SECRETARY

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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November 16, 2005
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Oprah Winfrey Show to profile Louisiana Prison: Dixon Correctional Institute staff and inmates provide a hopeful haven to displaced pets.

Jackson, LA. Dixon Correctional Institute has captured the attention of the Oprah Winfrey Show. The story of how 150 dogs, 50 cats, 25 chickens, 15 ducks and 12 geese came to have refuge at the medium security prison in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina will be told to the nation on Monday, November 28, 2005. The topic of the show is the animal evacuation of New Orleans and will feature DCI's animal shelter.

Warden James M. LeBlanc offered assistance to The United States Humane Society, who desperately needed accommodations for animals rescued from the flooded Crescent City of New Orleans. A barn on prison property proved to be an excellent shelter for the frightened and malnourished animals. Humane Society volunteer Claudia Mattheiss will be a guest of the Oprah Show. Ms. Mattheiss worked along side other volunteers, staff and inmates who initially manned the barn around the clock in order to meet the immediate needs of the animals. Inmates have been assigned to the area and have continued to feed, clean and care for their new neighbors. Warden LeBlanc states that the project has proven to be a great asset to the prison's rehabilitation program.

In the weeks that followed the devastation, descriptions of the animals were made public in the hopes that their owners would and could come forward to claim their pets. Animals not claimed have been cleared for adoption to those able to provide good homes.

Secretary Richard L. Stalder, head of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, often refers to the prison's sheltering of displaced animals when he speaks of the unique types of assistance his department was able to provide in order to give relief where it was needed while still fulfilling the mission of public safety.

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